

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-10 /080 W

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P R 251130Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON PRIORITY 2403

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI UAE

AMEMBASSY DOHA QATAR

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON UK

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT OMAN

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IRAN

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NEA/ARP FOR AMBASSADOR TWINAM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : PINS, PINT, PFOR, BA

SUBJECT : PRIME MINISTER REAPPOINTED: HINTS OF
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS TO COME

REF : MANAMA 0992

1. ON THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 24, THE AMIR OF BAHRAIN ISSUED A DECREE TO HIS BROTHER, THE PRIME MINISTER, SHAIKH KHALIFA BIN SULMAN AL KHALIFA, ASSURING HIM OF HIS CONFIDENCE AND ASKING HIM TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT. THUS CONTINUES BAHRAIN'S STYLIZED FRATERNAL POLITICAL MINUET.

2. IN THE DECREE, THE AMIR NOTES "WITH AGITATION" THE PRIME MINISTER'S JUDGEMENT THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO WORK WITH THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BECAUSE OF THE ANTI-NATIONAL, UNCOOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES OF SOME OF ITS MEMBERS (REFTEL). THE AMIR SAYS THAT IF THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES WITH THE
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CONSTITUTION SHOW THAT IT HAS FLAWS OR GAPS, THEN IT IS HIS

DUTY TO THE NATION TO SUGGEST "AMENDMENTS" TO THE DOCUMENT, WITHIN THE "GENERAL BASIS" OF THE CONSTITUTION. HE NOTES THAT THE HISTORY OF PARLIAMENTARY LIFE IS FULL OF EXAMPLES OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS WHICH "SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT IN A CALM AND QUIET ATMOSPHERE".

3. AMIRI DECREE CLOSES WITH HOPE THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL INVESTIGATE AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO AMELIORATE THE PEOPLES' REAL GRIEVANCES IN REGARD TO HOUSING AND FOOD SUPPLIES. HE FURTHER CALLED UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO ACT IN SUCH A MANNER THAT THE ISLAMIC BELIEFS WHICH CHARACTERIZE BAHRAINI SOCIETY AND CULTURE WOULD BE "MORE FIRMLY AND DEEPLY ESTABLISHED".

4. COMMENT: HAVING SAID WHAT HE SAID ABOUT THE CURRENT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (REFTEL), IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE THE PRIME MINISTER CONTINUING TO WORK WITH THIS ONE. THAT IS, THE SCENARIO NOW SEEMS TO CALL FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF THIS ASSEMBLY. IT WOULD ALSO SEEM TO CALL FOR SOME CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS, THE GROUNDWORK FOR WHICH IS EXPLICITLY LAID IN THE AMIRI DECREE OF AUGUST 24. END COMMENT.

5. THE CONSTITUTION OF BAHRAIN (MANAMA A-5 OF JUNE 20, 1973) IS QUITE EXPLICIT ABOUT THE WAYS BY WHICH ALL OR ANY OF IT MAY BE AMENDED OR SUSPENDED. AMENDMENTS CLEARLY REQUIRE A TWO-THIRDS AFFIRMATION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY, WHILE SUSPENSION OF THE CONSTITUTION OR ANY OF ITS PROVISIONS CAN BE DONE ONLY UNDER MARTIAL LAW CONDITIONS. THE AMIR, ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE, CAN POSTPONE MEETINGS OR DISSOLVE THE ASSEMBLY, BUT FOR SPECIFIED LENGTHS OF TIME ONLY. POSTPONEMENT IS FOR ONE MONTH ONLY. DISSOLUTION MUST BE FOLLOWED WITHIN TWO MONTHS BY FRESH ELECTIONS OR ELSE THE ASSEMBLY STANDS "RESTORED TO ITS FULL CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY" (ARTICLE 65).

6. THE BAZAAR IS UNDERSTANDABLY AWASH WITH RUMORS REGARDING AL KHALIFA INTENTIONS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO REPORT AS AND WHEN ACTUAL STEPS ARE TAKEN.
BURLEIGH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, ARRESTS, EXTREMISTS, LIBERATION FRONTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MANAMA00997
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750293-0529
From: MANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750822/aaaaasre.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 MANAMA 992
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <12 NOV 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: : PRIME MINISTER REAPPOINTED: HINTS OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS TO COME
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PFOR, BA, (KHALIFA, KHALIFA BIN SULMAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006